R E M A R K S

Reconsideration of this application, as amended, is respectfully requested.

ALLOWABLE SUBJECT MATTER

The Examiner's indication of the allowability of the subject matter of claim 7 is respectfully acknowledged.

Claim 7, however, has not been rewritten in independent form at this time since, as set forth in detail hereinbelow, it is respectfully submitted that amended independent claim 1 (and intervening claim 4) from which claim 7 depends also recites allowable subject matter.

RE: THE DRAWINGS

It is again respectfully requested that the Examiner check item 10 of the Office Action Summary sheet to indicate that the drawings filed with the application papers have been accepted as being formal.

RE: FOREIGN PRIORITY

It is again respectfully requested that the Examiner check item 12 of the Office Action Summary sheet to acknowledge the claim for foreign priority made in the present application.

RE: THE IDS DATED MAY 24, 2006

It is again respectfully requested that the Examiner consider and make of record the Japanese documents JP 59-64043, JP 62-221348, JP 11-89880, and JP 59-124524, cited in the IDS filed May 24, 2006. It appears that the Examiner did not consider the Japanese documents since their English language Abstracts were not provided. However, it is respectfully pointed out that the Japanese documents were cited in an English language International Search Report (ISR), and an International Preliminary Report on patentability (IPRP) and Written Opinion (also in English) which are already of record. See the IDS dated September 8, 2006. It is respectfully submitted that the ISR and the IPRP and the Written Opinion constitute an explanation of relevance of the Japanese documents. See MPEP 609.04(a) III. It is therefore again respectfully requested that the Examiner return a signed and initialed copy of the IDS Form dated May 24, 2006, to indicate that the Japanese documents (including JP 59-64043, JP 62-221348, JP 11-89880, and JP 59-124524) cited therein have been considered and made of record.

RE: THE IDS DATED MARCH 10, 2009

It is respectfully requested that the Examiner also consider and make of record the Japanese documents JP 60-189505 and JP 63-27405 cited in the IDS filed March 10, 2009. In this

connection, it is respectfully pointed out that JP 60-189505 and JP 63-27405 were cited in the Japanese Office Action dated December 16, 2008 issued in counterpart Japanese Application No. 2003-394360, the English language translation of which was submitted with the IDS filed March 10, 2009. JP 60-189505 and JP 63-27405 were also cited in the Information Statement regarding counterpart Japanese Application No. 2003-394360, the English language translation of which was also submitted with the IDS filed March 10, 2009. It is respectfully submitted that the English translations of the Japanese Office Action and/or the Information Statement constitute a concise explanation of relevance, thereby satisfying the requirement of MPEP 609.04(a) III, for consideration by the Examiner. Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that the Examiner return a signed and initialed copy of the IDS form dated March 10, 2009, to indicate that the Japanese documents cited therein (including JP 60-189505 and JP 63-27405) have been considered and made of record.[1]

RE: RESTRICTION REQUIREMENT

The Examiner's withdrawal of the restriction requirement and consideration of all of the claims on merits is respectfully acknowledged.

[1] It is noted that only partial copies of JP 60-189505 and JP 63-27405 were submitted with the IDS filed on March 10, 2009. For the Examiner's convenience, full copies of JP 60-189505 and JP 63-27405 are submitted herewith.

THE CLAIMS

_____Independent claim 1 has been amended to recite that the plurality of linear pattern elements are arranged in straight lines so that a constant number of the linear pattern elements are formed on any of the straight lines extending in a width direction orthogonal to the transfer direction of the absorbent body base, wherein the straight lines are defined anywhere along the transfer direction of the absorbent body base, and wherein distances between each of the constant number of the linear pattern elements along the width direction are equal to one another. See, for example, Fig. 4, and the disclosure in the specification at page 20, line 1 to page 21, line 2.

_____In addition, claim 4 has been amended to use the term "groove-like" shape in accordance with claim 1. In this connection, it is respectfully pointed out that claim 4 depends from claim 1, and that claim 1 recites that the linear pattern elements are formed to have a "groove-like" shape, thereby providing antecedent basis for "groove-like" in claim 4. In addition, it is respectfully pointed out that as disclosed in Figs. 3A and 3B, the abstract, and the specification at page 15, line 6 to page 16, line 4, the linear pattern elements (1a) are provided concavely by squeezing the absorbent body (4) by the processing projections (2a), so as to have a "groove-like" shape. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted requested that the

rejection of claim 4 under 35 USC 112, second paragraph, be withdrawn.

Still further, claim 9 has been added to recite the feature of the present invention whereby each of the plurality of processing projections are projected in a linear shape, and whereby the plurality of processing projections are individually spaced from one another and are disposed in a staggered manner. See, for example, Figs. 1 and 2, and the disclosure in the specification at page 15, line 6 to page 16, line 4.

No new matter has been added, and it is respectfully requested that the amendments to the claims be approved and entered, and that the rejection under 35 USC 112, second paragraph, be withdrawn.

THE PRIOR ART REJECTION

Claims 1, 2, 4, 6 and 8 were again rejected under 35 USC 103 as being obvious in view of the combination of previously cited USP 5,925,026 ("Arteman et al") and previously cited USP 4,333,979 ("Sciaraffa et al"). This rejection, however, is respectfully traversed with respect to the claims as amended hereinabove.

According to the present invention as recited in amended independent claim 1, a method for manufacturing an absorbent body is provided which comprises: (i) transferring a stripe-shaped absorbent body base, including an absorbent element obtained by

mixing at least pulp with super absorbent polymer, through a pair of rollers that are provided to be opposed to each other with a predetermined distance therebetween, wherein at least one of the rollers is a press print processing roller that has a plurality of processing projections with a predetermined layout on a circumference surface, (ii) forming a plurality of linear pattern elements on at least one surface of the absorbent body base, wherein the linear pattern elements are formed by being squeezed by the processing projections so as to have a groove-like shape, and wherein the plurality of linear pattern elements are individually spaced from one another and dispersed in a staggered manner, and (iii) cutting the absorbent body base to have a predetermined size after the linear pattern elements are formed, wherein the linear pattern elements are formed in a shape so that an orientation angle, which is a degree of inclination of the linear pattern elements to a transfer direction of the absorbent body base, is 50 degrees or less at any portion.

In addition and significantly, as recited in amended independent claim 1, the plurality of linear pattern elements are arranged in straight lines so that a constant number of the linear pattern elements are formed on any of the straight lines extending in a width direction orthogonal to the transfer direction of the absorbent body base, the straight lines being defined anywhere along the transfer direction of the absorbent

body base, and wherein distances between each of the constant number of the linear pattern elements along the width direction are equal to one another.

With the technique of the claimed present invention, the plurality of processing projections are provided in straight lines on the entire circumference of the press print processing roller so that a constant number of the processing projections are provided on each of the straight lines extending in the width direction orthogonal to the transfer direction of the absorbent body, and so that distances between each of the constant number of the processing projections in the width direction are equal to one another. See, for example, element 2a shown in Fig. 2 of the present application.

As a result, with the technique of the claimed present invention, the plurality of linear pattern elements are formed in straight lines on the absorbent body base so that the constant number of the linear pattern elements are formed on any of the straight lines extending in the width direction orthogonal to the transfer direction of the absorbent body base, such that the straight lines are defined anywhere along the transfer direction of the absorbent body base, and such that distances between each of the constant number of the linear pattern elements in the width direction are made to be equal to one another. It is noted that the absorbent body base of the claimed present invention is

produced by passing the stripe-shaped absorbent body base between the press print processing roller and, for example, a backup plain roller. See Fig. 2 item 1a. And with the technique of the claimed present invention, at the time of embossing, the linear pressure applied to the absorbent body base by the processing projections can be maintained at a constant level at all times and an advantageous effect is produced whereby line pressure applied from the press print processing roller in the width direction of the absorbent body base is always maintained to be uniform and the press print processing roller can be always driven and rotated in a stable manner without having vibration due to variation in pressure. See, for exmaple, the disclosure in the specification at page 10, line 14 to page 11, line 5.

It is respectfully submitted that none of the cited references disclose or suggest the above described claimed features and advantageous effects of the present invention as recited in amended independent claim 1.

On page 4 of the Final Office Action, the Examiner has cited Arteman et al as teaching the feature of the present invention whereby the linear pattern elements are arranged so that a predetermined number of the linear pattern elements are formed on each straight line extending in a width direction orthogonal to the transfer direction of the absorbent body base, and so that the linear pattern elements have a fixed distance thereamong in

the width direction. It is respectfully pointed out, however, that in Fig. 1 thereof, Arteman et al merely discloses that there are two apertures 20 on a straight line in a width direction orthogonal to a transfer direction of the absorbent pad and that there are four apertures 20 on another straight line (line 2-2 of Fig. 1) in the width direction at a different place along the transfer direction of the absorbent pad. That is, according to Arteman et al, the number of apertures 20 on each straight line extending line in the width direction is not constant. In addition, it is respectfully pointed out that in Arteman, the distances between each of the plurality of apertures 20 which are on a straight line in the width direction are different from each other. See Fig. 1 of Arteman et al.

Thus, according to the manufacturing method of Arteman et al, the number of embossed pattern elements (in an embossed pattern on a straight line in the width direction that is orthogonal to the longitudinal transfer direction of the absorbent body base) that are to be formed on the absorbent body base is different for different lines along the longitudinal transfer direction. Therefore, according to the manufacturing method of Artemann et al, when the embossed pattern is formed on the absorbent body base, the pressure applied from a press print processing roller to the absorbent body base changes depending on the (changing) number of embossed pattern elements formed on each

line in the embossed pattern. Accordingly, because of this pressure variation due to the difference in the number of embossed pattern elements to be formed on the different lines in the width direction orthogonal to the transfer direction of the absorbent body base, the manufacturing method of Artemann et al cannot achieve the advantageous effect achieved by the claimed present invention whereby the line pressure applied from the press print processing roller in the width direction of the absorbent body base is always maintained to be uniform and the press print processing roller can be always driven and rotated in a stable manner without having vibration due to variation in pressure. See the background of the invention portion of the specification at page 5, line 26 to page 6, line 12.

Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that Arteman et al clearly does not disclose or suggest the above described claimed features and advantageous effects of the present invention as recited in amended independent claim 1 whereby the plurality of linear pattern elements are arranged in straight lines such that a constant number of the linear pattern elements are formed on any of the straight lines extending in a width direction orthogonal to the transfer direction of the absorbent body base, wherein the straight lines are defined anywhere along the transfer direction of the absorbent body base, and wherein

distances between each of the constant number of the linear pattern elements in the width direction are equal to one another.

Sciaraffa et al, moreover, has been merely cited to teach formation of a layer by transferring the layer through a pair of opposed rollers wherein at least one of the rollers is a press print roller with a plurality of processing projections. And it is respectfully submitted that Sciaraffa et al does not disclose or suggest forming linear pattern elements as according to the claimed present invention.

Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that even if Arteman et al and Sciaraffa et al were combinable in the manner suggested by the Examiner, such combination would still not achieve or render obvious the formation of the linear pattern elements as according to the claimed present invention, or produce the advantageous effect achieved by the claimed present invention whereby the line pressure applied from the press print processing roller in the width direction of the absorbent body base is always maintained to be uniform and the press print processing roller can be always driven and rotated in a stable manner without having vibration due to variation in pressure.

Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that amended independent claim 1, and claims 2, 4 and 6-9 depending therefrom, clearly patentably distinguish over Arteman et al and Sciaraffa et al, taken singly or in combination, under 35 USC 103.

In view of the foregoing, entry of this Amendment, allowance of the claims and the passing of this application to issue are respectfully solicited.

If the Examiner has any comments, questions, objections or recommendations, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned for prompt action.

Respectfully submitted,

/Douglas Holtz/

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